

Update from the Department of Early Learning August 2010

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

On July 26, the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) met to review the draft Early Learning Plan. They recommended approval of this document. This is a very big moment for our state. We are poised to have, for the first time, a roadmap for building an early learning system that supports all children and families in Washington.

On September 1, the plan will be available online at www.del.wa.gov/plan. That will be the culmination of more than a year of hard work, public outreach and thinking about what we need to really support our youngest learners. And it signals the beginning of implementation: DEL along with our partners at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Thrive by Five Washington will lead that effort, but it will take many groups and individuals to bring this plan to life. Watch for more information September 1!



I was happy to be on KING 5 on August 3 to talk about the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program, which transferred to DEL on July 1. Please take a few minutes to watch at www.thrivebyfivewa.org/learningforlife.html, and read coverage on Thrive's blog of how Washington serves children with special needs.

—Bette Hyde, Director

DEL welcomes new leader to team



DEL NW Service Area
Manager Nancy Myles

Nancy Myles joined DEL on July 20 as Northwest Service Area Manager. We are happy to welcome her to the DEL Leadership Team, where she will oversee child care licensing and other early learning issues in the northwest part of the state.

Nancy comes to DEL from the Hutch Kids child care program at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, where she served as founder and executive director. Nancy brings many years of experience in child care policy and practice and early childhood education. She has three children.

Learn more about Nancy (including her favorite children's books!) at

www.del.wa.gov/about/leadership.aspx

DEL closed August 6

DEL will be closed on Friday, August 6. DEL staff are temporarily laid off that day due to state budget cuts as mandated in Senate Bill 6503. For more information, visit the Office of Financial Management website at: www.ofm.wa.gov/layoff/

DEL child care licensing supervisors will be available for child care emergencies only. Licensed child care providers can contact the licensing supervisor in their local DEL office *only for emergencies*. Find a list of DEL offices here: www.del.wa.gov/about/contact.aspx

If you need to report suspected child abuse or neglect, please call 1.866.END.HARM (1.866.363.4276). DEL will reopen on Monday, August 9.

Stay Connected

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WaKIDS assessment tool vendors selected

The tools that kindergarten teachers will use as part of the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) pilot during the upcoming school year have been chosen. Participating teachers are being trained during the first two weeks of August on one of three sets of tools selected through a competitive bid process:



- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Work Sampling System—Pearson
- Developing Skills Checklist—CTB/McGraw Hill

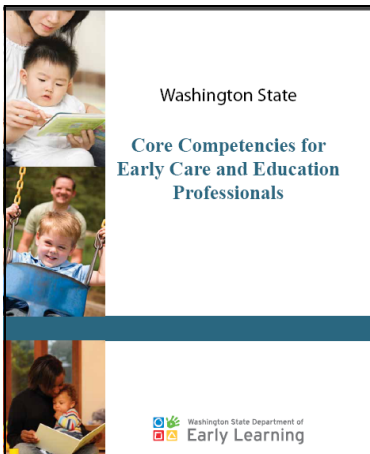
All three sets of tools will measure where children are in four developmental areas: social/emotional; cognitive; physical and literacy/language. The information gathered with these tools is meant to help teachers support development and learning for children.

Teachers will be asked to complete questionnaires throughout the year on how the tools worked in supporting their teaching.

Learn more about these tools and get other updates on WaKIDS at www.del.wa.gov/wakids

Draft core competencies available for public input this month

Document to help define needed skills to provide quality care



In 2009, the Legislature asked DEL and the Professional Development Consortium (PDC) to create a set of core competencies for early learning and child care professionals. This set of guidelines will define what professionals need to know and be able to do to provide quality education and care. It was developed by the Professional Development Consortium.

Check out the document at:

www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/core.aspx

You can give your input through a quick online survey available on the web page. Thanks for your thoughts!

MERIT update

Early learning professionals (including child care providers) can now search the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT) for available trainings.

MERIT is the new online database to help early learning professionals track basic State Training and Registry System (STARS) training and ongoing training. Visit it today at <http://merit.del.wa.gov>

STARS-approved trainers and training organizations are now adding their training opportunities to the database. To watch a “how-to” webinar for trainers and training organizations, visit www.del.wa.gov/publications/licensing/video/MERIT_webinar.wmv

A MERIT user manual for trainers and training organizations is posted on MERIT. A manual for early learning professionals will be posted in the coming days.

Does your family need more food this summer?

Call the Family Food Hotline at 1.888.4.FOOD.WA (1.888.436.6392) or visit <http://parenthelp123.org/resources/food-resources/summer-meals> to find meal sites around the state.

All kids and teens (18 years and younger) are eligible to come have free meals and snacks.



Third ‘reboot’ survey now available

Licensed child care providers can now take the third in DEL’s series of monthly “licensing reboot” surveys online at www.del.wa.gov/reboot

This month, we want to hear from licensed providers about DEL’s licensing policies and procedures, which are posted online at www.del.wa.gov/laws/licensing/ Which ones work well? Which are difficult? Do you have suggestions for how we can improve?

Feedback from the first reboot survey, about how DEL communicates with licensed providers, will be shared on www.del.wa.gov/reboot in the coming weeks.

The licensing reboot is a simple way for DEL to get input from licensed providers on several issues related to licensing. Also during the reboot, we are looking at what tools and resources our staff need to work effectively with child care providers to support safe and health child care.

If you need a hard copy of the survey, please contact your local DEL office.

SB 6759 technical workgroup web page now available

The 2010 Legislature passed Senate Bill 6759, which requires a work group to develop a plan that examines opportunities and barriers to at least two options for a comprehensive voluntary program of early learning: as a part of the state definition of basic education, or as an entitlement program executed by statute or constitutional amendment.

This is our state's chance to look at what a "voluntary program of early learning" should look like in Washington to help ensure school-readiness for all children, and how we would fund it.

DEL and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction have convened this group, which has already met twice. Information and updates from the group will be posted on the new workgroup page at www.del.wa.gov/government/legislature/voluntary.aspx.



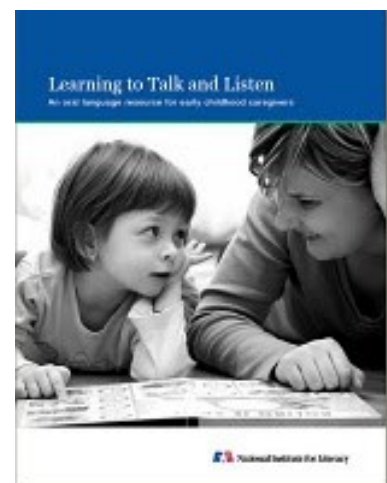
New resources for providers to support children's language/literacy skills

This summer, the National Institute for Literacy issued two new research-based resources for child care providers with easy ideas for supporting early language and literacy development.

First, the *Make Time to Talk* tip sheets have simple, fun ideas for center-based and family home child care providers to help build early language skills that last a lifetime. Among the tips:

- Two-way conversations are best. The child should be doing at least half the talking.
- Tell stories to the children and ask them to tell you stories about their families and lives.
- Act out stories with the children, re-using words from the book you read aloud with the children.
- Kneel or squat to be able to have eye contact with the child.

Second, *Learning to Talk and Listen: An oral language resource for early childhood caregivers*, is a short booklet with information about why adult-child conversations matter and how to talk with young children. Both are available online at www.nifl.gov.



DEL, DSHS prepare for 12-month WCCC eligibility

Effective date of rule extended from August 15 to September 1

DEL and DSHS staff are working hard to ensure easy-to-understand information is available when a new state law takes effect allowing a 12-month eligibility period for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). A family may qualify for extended eligibility, if:

- A child receives services from Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), a Head Start program, or an Early Head Start program; and
- The family is eligible for WCCC.

We expect the effective date of the rule will be September 1. Watch for more information about this change during the month!

Do you have school-age children? OSPI wants to hear from you!

DEL is working with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to help collect information about how Washington families want to communicate with their children's school districts.

The survey gives parents a chance to say how they like to talk with their schools, such as through meetings or flyers, and how much they like to be involved with their children's schools. OSPI will use the survey results to make recommendations to districts on how to reach out to parents.

To take the survey in English, visit:

www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22AXEYPZ597

To take the survey in Spanish, visit:

www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22AXLBB4DEV

Upcoming early learning events...

Starting Strong Institutes

- August 5 and 6, Yakima Convention Center—www.esd105.wednet.edu
- August 9 and 10, Marriott Hotel in SeaTac—www.psesd.org

August 6-8—Baby Jamboree

www.wsdsonline.org/blind/index.html#BabyJam

August 14— Early Learning Community Fair

<http://earlylearning.org/events/2010-community-fair>

